

No 5
*The Duty of Benevolence and Brotherly Love,
and the ill Effects of a Party Spirit.*

Considered in a

S E R M O N

Preached at the

A S S I Z E S

HELD AT

Newcastle upon Tyne,

O N

Tuesday the 8th of August, 1727.

By the Honourable

Mr. Baron *C A R T E R*,

A N D

Mr. Justice *P R O B Y N*.

Published by the Order of the Judges,

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T O T H E

Right Rev^d Father in GOD,

W I L L I A M,

Lord Bishop of *Durham*.

My LORD,



Whoever attempts, in the best Manner he can, to recommend Allegiance and Fidelity to the Crown, and universal Peace and Good-will among his Fellow Subjects; becomes entitled to your Lordship's Indulgence, and may even promise himself some Degree of your Approbation.

I am sensible, my Lord, that the more you approve of such an Undertaking, the greater Concern it will give you to find it here so feebly executed: But yet I have the Pleasure of reflecting, with great Assurance, that your
Lordship

DEDICATION.

Lordship had much rather see a good Meaning weakly supported, than an ill one dressed up in the most plausible Colours, and carried on with the utmost Advantage.

That this Discourse, however imperfect, may contribute to promote a Sense of what is truly human, and truly Christian; that disengaged from the Prejudices and Restraints of Party, our Hearts may be open to all Mankind; that in Imitation of your Lordship's high Example, we may stedfastly propose the Maintenance and Advancement of true Religion, and the publick Welfare; that pursuing these great Ends by your Lordship's wise Measures, we may be cordially affected, and immoveably attached to our King, our Constitution, and our Country; is the earnest Wish of,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most obedient

and most humble Servant,

John Balguy



ROMANS XII. Part of the tenth
Verse.

*Be kindly affectioned one to another,
with brotherly Love;-----*



O secure, in some Measure, the
Observance of this necessary
Duty, God has framed Mens
Minds with suitable Propensi-
ties, and engaged them by na-
tural Instinct. They are born with kind Af-
fections for each other, and cannot divest them-
selves of them, without grossly corrupting their
Nature, and doing great Violence to their own
Minds. Every Man, who is not thus deprav-
ed, perceives and feels in himself this Dispo-
sition; prompting him to do Good, and, upon
all proper Occasions, stirring him up to Acts of
Kindness. The Sight of any Object in great
Distress nearly touches him, and before he has
had Time to reflect, he finds himself power-
fully moved. His very Spirits take the Alarm,
and his Heart beats quick with Charity and
Compassion. In short, he finds in himself a
warm Inclination to relieve the unhappy Per-
son, and is in Pain till he accomplish it. In
like manner, tho' it be with less Emotion, he
B naturally

naturally sympathizes with the Happy as well as the Miserable; *rejoicing with them that rejoice*, as well as *weeping with them that weep*. He will take a real Pleasure in the Prosperity of others, and be delighted with every Instance of good Fortune that befalls them.—— This, I say, is the natural Temper of Mens Minds, which accordingly appears, and shews itself, in all that are uncorrupted; who never fail to partake of the Joys and Miseries of their fellow Creatures. Conscious of this Disposition we stile it *Humanity*, thereby not only allowing it to belong to our Nature, but appropriating it to our own Species.—— It may not perhaps be needless to add, that the Object of these kind Inclinations is also unlimited. We are indeed too apt to restrain natural Affection to our Kindred, not only in the Signification of the Word, but in the Exercise of what it means; thereby contracting it into a very narrow Compass. But this is a Corruption of our Nature, as well as of our Language. For natural Affection certainly extends, tho' in a different Degree, to our whole Species, and prompts us to embrace Mankind with universal good Will. And this is agreeable to the Sense of my Text, where the Apostle directs this *natural Affection* to be exercised and exerted towards *one another*; and moreover requires us to cherish it in this Latitude, and *take Pleasure in it*. For so the * Original most properly signifies.—This being premised, I beg Leave to consider briefly, what Obligations we lie under, as Men, and as Chris-

* Εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι.

stians,

stians, to cultivate and improve these kind Affections. And

1st, I would enquire into the *Reasonableness* of the Duty. That the Esteem and Affection of our fellow Creatures is a real Good, needs no other Proof, than every Man's own Experience. If we consider it abstractedly from its beneficial Effects, even thus we may discover it to have an intrinsic Value; and that because it is naturally grateful to the Mind that possesses it, which of itself is a sufficient Reason for its being so generally desired and prized. However, it becomes much more valuable by those Benefits and Services that flow from it; Esteem and Good-will are naturally accompanied with an Inclination to perform good Offices. Whenever therefore we are in Possession of the former, we think ourselves in some measure entitled to the latter; and for the Sake both of the one and the other, we all covet the Affections of other Men, and are desirous of recommending ourselves to their Favour and Friendship. From hence it follows by the plainest Rule of Reason and Equity, that we ought to bear good Will towards them: For how can we expect that others should be well-affected to us, if we be disaffected, or even indifferent towards others? In like manner, how can we pretend to receive Kindnesses and Benefits, if we refuse, on a proper Occasion, to confer them? Supposing Abilities and Opportunities equal, they must needs have the same Title to our good Offices, that we have to theirs; because no

Reason or Plea can possibly be alledged by us, but what may equally be alledged by them. The Obligations therefore between us, are, and must be reciprocal, and by Consequence all Men are obliged to be kindly affectioned, and friendly to each other. But,

2dly, We may perceive even a *Necessity* of practising this Duty, in the very Condition and Circumstances of our Being. Man is by Nature weak and indigent, and not capable alone of making any tolerable Provision for his own Welfare ; he is liable to many Evils which he cannot redress; expos'd to many Wants which he is not able to supply, and incumber'd with many Desires which he knows not how to gratify. In all these Respects he stands in need of the Protection or Assistance of his fellow Creatures, and the same helpless Condition being common to all Mankind, necessarily fixes the whole Species in a State of Dependence upon one another. Hence we find, that they ever had Recourse to Society, as the common Refuge of human Infirmities ; where, by a mutual Communication of Service, and Interchange of good Offices, they might obtain those Comforts of Life which were not to be met with in Solitude. But how could this Point be gained, or how should Society turn to any Account, without those kind Affections, and that friendly Disposition, which we are considering ? If Men were generally disinclined to one another, if, instead of Kindness and Affability, they receiv'd each other with Aversion

and

and Disdain, if they were morose, and unsociable, contentious and quarrelsome, prone to give Offence, and commit Wrongs, and yet impatient of the least Injury, and implacable in their Resentments: If, I say, such a Temper as this generally prevail'd, who sees not that Society would be a Curse, instead of a Blessing? Upon this Supposition the best and wisest Thing that Men could do, would be to break up and disperse, to return into Solitude, and even hide themselves in a Desert.—But without these Extremities, it is evident that the Happiness of any Community is disturb'd and diminish'd, in Proportion to the Unkindness and Ill-will that arise in it. And even a bare Indifference, as far as it extends, defeats the End of Society, and renders it useless to Mankind. If we turn the Supposition the other Way, we may discover,

3dly, The great *Advantage* of a benevolent Disposition. Let us then suppose a Society flourishing in Peace, and cemented by Love; where all the Members were inviolably attach'd to the publick Good, and harmoniously conspired in the Service thereof; where unfeigned good Will, and undissembled Affection, universally prevail'd; where every Man was a sincere Friend to every Man; in a word, where all Men vigorously and chearfully exerted themselves in Acts of Kindness, and Labours of Love: What could be more beneficial, or more delightful, than such a Temper, and such a Practice? What could sooner, or better, or more effectually, advance and establish the publick

Happiness, and the Welfare of every Individual? The very Idea of such a Society carries a Proof along with it of the Point before us, and presents to our View innumerable Pleasures and Advantages, which, alas! we can only enjoy in Speculation.—And as such a Disposition has a happy Influence on Society (which in Fact is always proportionable to the Prevalence of it) so it produces suitable Effects in the Minds of all who are bless'd with it. For not to mention that Peace and Tranquility which must necessarily arise from the Absence of many turbulent and tormenting Passions, it may be laid down as a certain Truth, that so much Benevolence is in Reality so much Happiness; every Exercise of it is naturally pleasing to him who is truly possess'd of it, and the higher it rises, and the further it extends, the more delightful it becomes. Generous Actions are a perpetual Gratification to a generous Spirit, and the charitable Man is ever feasting upon his own Charities: They often enjoy, in doing Good, a greater, and more exquisite Pleasure, than the most refin'd Voluptuary ever tasted.—But the good Man's Satisfaction is not confin'd within the narrow Sphere of his own Abilities. Whatever Good is done, or whatever Good is receiv'd, if it fall within the Compass of his Observation, or come to his Knowledge, he enjoys it in Reflection, and it becomes a real Addition to his own Happiness. The very Blessings of Heaven that descend every where in such Plenty and Profusion, all administer to his Comfort, and contribute

bute to the Increase of his Treasure. Where-
 ever they may directly fall, they are sure to re-
 bound upon him ; forasmuch as he continually
 rejoices at them, and is ever well pleas'd with
 his Neighbour's Success. In short, he thus par-
 takes of all the Prosperity that he sees or hears
 of, and is a Sharer of every Man's Joy.

4thly, We may proceed to consider the *Ex-
 cellence* of this benevolent Disposition. And
 most certainly nothing can be more agreeable
 to the Dignity of our Natures, nothing can
 more improve or adorn our Minds, nothing can
 raise them to a higher, or nobler Pitch. What
 can be better, what more amiable, than kind
 Affections, and worthy Actions? Those shining
 Characters in History, which have been trans-
 mitted down from Age to Age with so much
 Applause, and charm'd every Reader; what In-
 gredients do they consist of? Are they not made
 up of Benevolence, Kindness, Humanity, Ge-
 nerosity, publick Spirit, and the Love of Man-
 kind? Animated by such Principles as these,
 the Benefactors of Antiquity perform'd the most
 illustrious Actions, surmounting all Difficulties,
 and chearfully sacrificing Wealth, Ease, Liber-
 ty, and Life itself, to the publick Good. What
 Wonder, then, if such Names be cover'd with
 Glory, and attract the Admiration of all Poste-
 rity? And in Truth there is something so beau-
 tiful, so lovely, in Beneficence and Kindness,
 that all Men of honest and undepraved Minds
 are naturally very much delighted with such e-
 minent Examples of them.—But the Excellence

of this Temper chiefly consists in its Conformity to the Goodness and Perfection of God himself, who * *maketh his Sun to rise on the Just and on the Unjust.* † *Who loads us with his Benefits, and crowns us with Mercy and loving Kindness.* Who showers down on all his Creatures Blessings and Bounties in the greatest Abundance, and is every Moment communicating Good, and diffusing Happiness through a whole Universe, and all this without a Possibility of any other View, than that of doing Good, and making happy.— Whatever then is the best Imitation, and the nearest Resemblance of this Goodness that Men are capable of, must needs be most worthy, and most excellent, and conduce in the highest Degree to the raising, improving, and accomplishing our Natures. And this is the very Case of the Virtue I am treating of. For certainly nothing can be more divine than Love and Charity; nothing more god-like than doing Good. From whence we may justly conclude, not only that it is God's Will we should imitate him herein, but that we should be particularly careful to attain so great an Excellence, to arrive at so divine a Perfection. Thus far, then, our Obligations reach as we are *Men*, directed only by the Light of Nature, and instructed by Reason.

We are next to consider ourselves as Christians, in which View we shall find our Obligations carried to a much greater Height. Those *kind Affections* with which Nature and Reason jointly inspire us, are by Christianity exalted into *brotherly Love*; we are not to look upon ourselves

* Mat. v. 45. † Ps. lxxviii. 19. ciii. 4.

as bound only by the Ties of Humanity; we are not to consider our fellow Christians barely as Partakers of the same Nature, but as *Brethren*, in the highest and most sacred Sense; as Members of the same Body, as Partakers of the same Redemption, and Coheirs of everlasting Life. These Considerations bind us in a peculiar manner to *brotherly Love*. And accordingly the Gospel every where enjoins and inculcates it with great Strictness. * *This is the Message*, says the Apostle, *that ye heard from the Beginning that we should love one another*. And indeed it is evident that Christ and his Apostles, from the Beginning to the End of their Ministry, breathed nothing but the purest Love, and most *fervent Charity*. They earnestly exhorted and urged Men to it, and laid the utmost Stress on it upon all Occasions.—It is stiled by the Apostle † *the royal Law*; it is represented as || *the End of the Commandment*, or, in other Words, as the main Scope and Drift of the Christian Institution. It is said to be ** *the Bond of Perfection*, and †† *the fulfilling of the Law*. Our blessed Saviour not only most emphatically calls it |||| *his Commandment*, but makes Choice of it as the most proper Badge and Characteristick of his Followers. *† *By this*, says he, *shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if you love one another*. Thereby plainly informing us, that it is not only an indispensable Duty, but a Virtue of the highest Rank, and the most essential Quality of

* 1 John iii. 11. † Jam. ii. 8. || 1 Tim. i. 5. ** Col. iii. 14. †† Rom. xiii. 10. |||| John xv. 12. *† Ib. xiii. 35.

a Christian.—And as Christ has given us such Precepts concerning Love and Charity, so he was himself the highest and most perfect Example of it, that ever appear'd in the World. Those Characters, however illustrious, which I hinted at before, were as much beneath his, in all Respects, as the Gentile Morality was inferior to the Doctrines of the Gospel. Whenever we seriously reflect, who he was, and what we were, and consider at the same Time what he did, and what he suffered, from first to last, for the sinful and unworthy Race of Mankind; we immediately discover that there never was upon Earth any Love like his; a Love so active, so intense, so unlimited, and so divine, that no Words are able to express it, no Thoughts to conceive it.

Having thus consider'd our Obligations, as Men, and as Christians to perform this Duty; I might proceed to observe, and lament the Deficiency and Disproportion of our Practice. I might also point out the chief Causes and Occasions of it, and endeavour to lay down such Rules, as seem'd to conduce most to the promoting of Benevolence and brotherly Love: But the Remainder of my Time not allowing of many Particulars, I only beg Leave to insist upon one, and to offer an Expedient, which tho' perhaps less regarded, yet seems to be of very great Importance.

What I mean is, that we would carefully guard our Minds against that *Spirit of Party* which usually prevails so much among us, and to which we seem so unaccountably addicted.

It

such It must indeed be confess'd, that it is of late considerably abated, and good Reason have we to rejoice at it. But then we should not neglect it upon this Account; on the contrary, we should look upon this as a fair Opportunity of exerting ourselves, and expelling it quite from among us. Since our Distemper has remitted, it may now be more easily dealt with. We should therefore use our utmost Endeavours to perfect a Cure, and prevent a Relapse. It may be justly question'd, whether there be any Impediment to Love and Charity greater and more powerful than this; and therefore nothing is more to be wish'd than an entire Removal of it.

In order whereto, we should do well to consider, what various Mischiefs and Miseries attend it, how many Ways it tends to disturb our Happiness, and embitter our Lives.—And here it were easy to shew, how unavoidably it destroys the *Peace of our Minds*, by introducing needless Disquietudes and Vexations, by kindling the most troublesome Passions, and blowing up the Coals of Strife and Contention.—It were easy to shew, how deeply it injures our *Reputations*, by occasioning a mutual Propagation of Calumny and Slander; by causing the fairest Actions to be misrepresented and discoloured, by rendering it almost impossible for any Man, with his utmost Endeavours, to give a general Content, or even gain any Approbation out of his own Party.—I might also observe how it tends to corrupt our very *Understandings*; as it infuses into them innumerable Prejudices, and thereby vitiates our Judgments; as it draws them off from

from the Evidence of Things, and represents to them Questions and Facts in a false Light; as it renders them pliant, and ductile, and easy to be deluded; As it inures them to embrace notorious Fashions, and digest the most palpable Absurdities.—— But more especially we should consider, how ill an Effect it has on our *Morals*. It lessens our Concern for Things of great Moment, and increases it for Matters of no Consequence. It inclines us to Bigotry and Superstition. It tends to confound the very Distinctions of Good and Evil. It undermines Justice and Mercy, the main Pillars of all Religion. It roots up our kind Affections, and good Dispositions; and instead of them fills our Hearts with Rage and Rancour. In short, this Party Spirit eats into our Breasts like a Cancer; corrupts and poisons our best Humours; and in a great measure devours that Love and Good-Will, which is the chief Ornament of our Minds, and the Glory of our Natures.

Nor is it less injurious to the Public, than private Persons. It is evident from the Nature of the Thing, and from what has been already observed, that nothing can have a greater Tendency to embroil a State, and throw it into the utmost Disorder. As sure as Love and Unity is the great Bond of Society, so sure is Division and Strife the Bane of it. Those jarring Aims, and interfering Motions which are produced by it, must necessarily occasion Stops and Breaches among the Wheels

of Government. And if it rise high, and be of long Continuance, the best and firmest Constitution in the World must at last sink under it.—But let us appeal to Fact and Experience. Does not this abundantly inform us, that where *Party-Strife is, there is Confusion and every evil Work?* Has it not sometimes thrown us into the most dangerous Ferments? Has it not put the Kingdom into Flames, that no Body knew how to extinguish? and which in Spite of all Endeavours, have continued and raged on to the next Generation? — It is with good Reason believed, that this Kingdom can only fall by its own Hands. So kind have Nature and Providence been to us; such is our Situation, and so great our Strength; that if ever we come to Ruin, if ever we be *brought to Desolation*, it must be by being *divided against our selves*. By that intestine Strife which preys upon our Vitals, and cuts the very Sinews of Government.—Next to the Love of our whole Species, our strongest Obligations are to the Love of our Country. And accordingly it is deeply rooted in our Natures, and hardly to be effaced by Time or Accident. What Pity it is so noble a Passion should ever degenerate, and dwindle into Affection for a Party?

Should it be enquired, what it is that thus straitens our Minds, and contracts our Inclinations; I believethis Mischief would be found originally owing to Vanity and Self-Love. For how comes it to pass that we are so much
pleased

pleased with those of our own Party ? Because they subscribe to our Sentiments, and think as we do. And why are we so much offended at the Adversary ? Because he rejects our Opinions, and follows his own. And what does all this amount to, but a Compliment paid to our own Understandings ? It is not otherwise to be conceived, how the Opinions of others come to affect us, either with so much Complacency, or Displeasure.

To these Considerations give me only leave to add, what naturally offers it self to our Thoughts at this Time. As nothing can be more seasonable, nothing more dutiful ; so I humbly suppose, nothing could be more acceptable to our Gracious Sovereign, in this Beginning of his Reign, than for his Subjects to make him a joint Sacrifice of all their remaining Feuds and Animosities. How just and solid a Pleasure would it give him, to see all Discord, all Variance at an End ; and the Hearts of his whole People knit together in the Bonds of mutual Affection ? Such a Period put to our domestick Dissentions, would not only contribute to his Repose ; would not only make his Crown sit easy upon his Head ; but very much add to the Lustre of it. Nay it would redound more to his Glory, than holding the Balance of *Europe*, and being the awful Umpire of contending Kingdoms.

And as to our selves, what can be more beneficial, what more desirable ? are they not our Differences and Divisions, that chiefly, at any
Time,

Time, obstruct our Happiness? is not this the very Evil, that lately hung over us, like a thick Cloud, and darkned our Prospect? A Prospect both then and now filled with such Blessings, as not only intimately affect us, but promise Security and Happiness to many distant Generations. If our Laws, our Liberties, our Religion be dear to us, we cannot but rejoice to see them so firmly guarded, and strongly fenced. To see the Throne filled by a Prince, who along with the Crown and Dignity of his Royal Father, inherits his high Qualities, and Kingly Endowments; who greatly approves and admires our happy Constitution; who is cordially devoted to the Welfare of his People, and attached to them by Inclination, and Affection, no less than by Interest. To see likewise round about the Throne a hopeful, and numerous Progeny, blooming in all the Gifts of Nature, and blessed with all the Advantages of Education; from their Infancy formed to every Thing praise-worthy, by a Princess of the greatest Virtue, and most consummate Wisdom. These, and the like Blessings, how we may prize, now we have them, I shall not pretend to say; but most certainly if we had them not, we should desire them above all Things, and think them of inestimable Value.

Upon the whole, if we have any Regard to our own Welfare, or the Interest of our Posterity; if we bear any true Love to our King, or our Country; let us make it appear by entirely putting an end to our unhappy Divisions.

Let

Let us no longer exasperate each other by virulent Words, and opprobrious Terms of Distinction; by injurious Actions, or disobliging Treatment; but *be kindly affectioned one to another with Brotherly Love.* Let us distinguish our Selves no otherwise, than by being perfectly well affected to our excellent Constitution in Church and State, and to Him who happily presides over both. And let no other Strife be prolonged among us, except who shall be most zealous and active in the Service of the Public. This we may surely do, without engaging in any Party: provided we do but take Care to live peaceably and charitably with those who have the Misfortune to be otherwise minded. We are obliged * *in Meekness and Gentleness to instruct those who oppose themselves.* This is the Christian Rule; and no Difference of Opinion how wide soever, can ever justify our Departure from it.—To conclude, let us unanimously *follow after the Things that make for Peace.* And since we are bless'd with the best Constitution, and the purest Religion in the World; and with the fairest Hopes of a long Enjoyment of Both: Since Divine Providence has distinguished us by numberless Mercies and Favours, above all the Nations round about us; let us shew our Selves grateful by a wise, a virtuous, and a peaceable Conduct; and study henceforward to *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called.*

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

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